

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations
and is not a part of the Official Record

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,
please do not report the images to the
Image Problem Mailbox.**

⑫

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION
published in accordance with Art.
158(3) EPC

⑰ Application number: 88908378.8

⑤① Int. Cl.⁴: **B29C 45/64** , **B29C 45/66** ,
B29C 45/70 , **B22D 17/26**

⑳ Date of filing: 28.09.88

⑥⑥ International application number:
PCT/JP88/00990

⑨⑦ International publication number:
WO 89/03757 (05.05.89 89/10)

③③ Priority: 24.10.87 JP 267627/87

④③ Date of publication of application:
25.10.89 Bulletin 89/43

⑧④ Designated Contracting States:
CH DE FR GB IT LI

⑦① Applicant: **FANUC LTD**
3580, Shibokusa Aza-Komanba Oshino-mura
Minamitsuru-gun Yamanashi 401-05(JP)

⑦② Inventor: **INABA, Yoshiharu**
3509, Ikuta Tama-ku Kawasaki-shi
Kanagawa 214(JP)
Inventor: **NAITO, Hideo**
5-16-14, Hirayama Hino-shi
Tokyo 191(JP)

Inventor: **WATANABE, Kikuo** Room 7-209
Fanuc Manshonharimomi
3539-1, Shibokusa Oshino-mura,
Minamitsuru-gun
Yamanashi 401-05(JP)

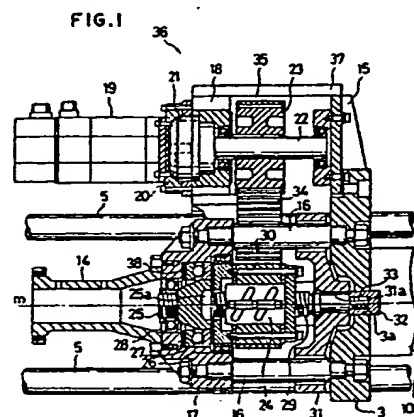
Inventor: **IWATSUKI, Masayuki** Fanuc Dai-3
Vira-karamatsu
3527-1, Shibokusa Oshino-mura
Minamitsuru-gun
Yamanashi 401-05(JP)

⑦④ Representative: **Billington, Lawrence Emlyn et al**
HASELTINE LAKE & CO Hazlitt House 28
Southampton Buildings Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1AT(GB)

⑤④ **COMPRESSOR FOR INJECTION COMPRESSION MOLDING MACHINES.**

EP 0 338 086 A1
⑤⑦ A compressor unit of an injection-compression molding machine is provided, which is higher in control performance than a hydraulic compressor unit, and is capable of performing high-accuracy molding with satisfactory reproducibility.

A compression pin (32) is fixed to the tip end of a ball screw (29) threadedly engaged with a ball nut (24) which is coupled, by means of a power transmission mechanism (35), to a servomotor (19) attached to a movable platen (3). As the servomotor rotates, the compression pin axially moves together with the ball screw, thereby projecting from the movable platen toward a die (100) to compress molten resin filling the mold.



COMPRESSOR UNIT IN AN INJECTION-COMPRESSION MOLDING MACHINE

Technical Field

The present invention relates to an injection-compression molding machine for compressing molten resin injected into molds, in molding the resin, and more particularly, to a compressor unit thereof.

Background Art

In molding special resin which lacks in fluidity at a normal injection temperature, or in precision molding of products, such as lenses or optical disk substrates, which require dimensional accuracy in microns or higher accuracy, injection-compression molding is effected such that resin injected into molds is compressed, in order to attain improvement in dimensional accuracy and uniformity in material density.

Usually, the injection-compression molding is effected by pushing out a compression pin, at a clamp mechanism section of an injection-molding machine, from a movable platen toward the molds by means of a hydraulic mechanism, thereby thrusting a pressure block toward a cavity of the movable-side mold, at a point of time corresponding to a pressure hold process after the end of the injecting operation. In the injection-compression molding of this type, it is essential to control the operation timing, thrusting force, or position of the compression pin. However, in high-accuracy molding, for example, use of a hydraulic compressor unit, as in a conventional arrangement, causes change of the properties of a hydraulic operating fluid depending on the temperature and the like, thereby changing the follow-up performance and reproducibility of the operation of the compressor unit. Thus, it is difficult accurately to control the compression pin. Since the hydraulic compressor unit is liable to be contaminated by the hydraulic operating fluid, and is under high pressure, moreover, it must be strictly maintained, and the unit itself is expensive.

Disclosure of the Invention

The object of the present invention is to provide a compressor unit of an injection-compression molding machine, having high control perfor-

mances, including follow-up performance, reproducibility, etc., and capable of high-accuracy molding.

In order to achieve the above object, according to the present invention, there is provided a compressor unit of an injection-compression molding machine in which a pin is projected from a movable platen toward a mold mounted on the platen, thereby compressing molten resin filling the mold. The compressor unit comprises a servomotor disposed on the movable platen, a ball nut operatively coupled to the servomotor for rotation, and a ball screw adapted to be threadedly engaged with the ball nut and move in the axial direction, accompanying the rotation of the ball nut, and operatively coupled to the pin.

Thus, in the compressor unit of the present invention, the compression pin is driven by means of the servomotor with the aid of the ball screw and the ball nut, so that variation factors on control related to the compression pin can be eliminated, and high-quality precision moldings can be repeatedly obtained. Moreover, the compressor unit can be relatively easily maintained without soiling its surroundings, and can be constructed at a relatively low cost.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a front view, partially in section, showing the principal part of a compressor unit according to one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic front view, partially in section, showing a clamp mechanism of an injection-compression molding machine furnished with the compressor unit of Fig. 1; and

Fig. 3 is a sectional view taken along line III-III of Fig. 2.

Best Mode of Carrying Out the Invention

An injection-compression molding machine according to one embodiment of the present invention is provided with a direct-acting clamp mechanism 1 shown in Fig. 2. In this clamp mechanism, a movable platen 3 is disposed for reciprocation along four tie bars (some of which are designated by numeral 5) which connects a stationary platen 2 and a rear platen 4 with each other. Dies (not shown) are mounted individually on the platens 2

Pigskp

and 3.

Rear platen 4 is fitted with a clamping servomotor 8 and a clamping ball screw 7 which, having a clamping ball nut 6 threadedly fitted thereon, extends along a longitudinal axis \bar{m} of the clamp mechanism 1. The ball screw 7 and the servomotor 8 are coupled to each other by means of a clamping power transmission mechanism 12 which is composed of pulleys 9 and 10 fixed to the rear end portion of the ball screw 7 and the output shaft of the servomotor, respectively, and a timing belt 11 connecting the two pulleys, and is disposed on the rear end face side of the rear platen 4.

A machine frame 13, which is fixed to the movable platen 3 for axial movement integral with the platen 3 and supports a compressor unit 36 mentioned later, includes front and rear support portions 15 and 18 and a housing 17, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The front support portion 15 is attached to one side of the peripheral surface of the movable platen 3 so as to protrude radially outward therefrom. The housing 17 is disposed in alignment with the axis \bar{m} of the clamp mechanism 1, and is fixed to the rear end face of the movable platen 3 by means of four guide rods (see Fig. 3) 16, so as to be situated parallel to the movable platen 3 and axially spaced from the platen 3. The rear support portion 18 is mounted on the peripheral surface of housing 17 so as to protrude radially outward from the peripheral surface and to face the front support portion 15 at an axial distance therefrom.

A hollow pusher case 14, coaxial with the housing 17, is fixed to the rear end face of the housing, and the clamping ball nut 6 is fixed to the rear end face of the case. That portion of the clamping ball screw 7 on the side of the pusher case 14, with respect to the nut 6, is located inside the case. The rear support portion 18 is fitted with a compression servomotor 19 and a speed reducer 21 connected to an output shaft 20 thereof, the servomotor 19, in conjunction with various elements mentioned later, constituting a compressor unit 36. An output shaft 22 of the speed reducer 21 has a pulley 23 on an intermediate portion thereof, and the proximal and distal ends of the output shaft 22 are supported by the rear and front support portions 18 and 15, respectively.

A nut housing 25, which is disposed in a hollow of the housing 17 so as to be coaxial therewith, is rotatably supported on the housing 17 by means of a large-diameter radial bearing 16, a thrust bearing 27, and an angular bearing 28. A pulley 30, having a compression ball nut 24 fitted therein for integral rotation, is fixed to the front end face of the nut housing 25 so as to be in alignment with the pulley 23, with respect to the axial direction. A timing belt 34 is passed around and between the two pulleys

23 and 30. These elements 23, 30 and 34, along with the speed reducer 21, constitute a power transmission mechanism 35 for transmitting the rotatory force of the servomotor 19 to the ball nut 24. The compressor unit 36 is made compact by locating the mechanism 35 between the platen 3 and the housing 17.

Further, a compression ball screw 29 is threadedly engaged with the ball nut 24. The ball screw 29 is disposed so that its rear end portion can be removably fitted in a center hole 25a which is formed in the nut housing 25. The front end portion of the ball screw 29 extends to an axial position on the side of the movable platen 3 with respect to the compression ball nut 24, and penetrates an axial hole 31a bored through a supporter 31 which is supported for axial movement by means of the guide rods 16. A compression pin 32 is threadedly fixed on a screw 33 at the tip end of the ball screw 29. The pin 32 can be projected from the movable platen 3 toward a mold (part of which is designated by numeral 100) attached to the movable platen 3, through a through hole 3a formed in the movable platen 3 in alignment with the axis \bar{m} of the clamp mechanism 1.

In Fig. 1, numeral 37 denotes a coupling bar, which connects the respective upper surfaces of the front and rear support portions 15 and 18, thereby reinforcing both these support portions. A pressure sensor 38 is disposed between the thrust bearing 27 and the housing 17. Further, the injection-compression molding machine is provided with a control section (not shown), e.g., a numerical control unit, constructed in a conventional manner. This control section is operatively connected to the clamp mechanism 1 and the compressor unit 36.

The following is a description of the operation of the aforementioned injection-compression molding machine.

In response to a command from the control section, the clamping servomotor 8 of the clamp mechanism 1 is first rotated before the start of injection and compression processes. Following this, the clamping ball screw 7 is rotated in a predetermined direction by means of the clamping power transmission mechanism 12. As a result, the clamping ball nut 6 moves forward along the axis \bar{m} , thereby causing the movable platen 3, along with the compressor unit 36 mounted on the machine frame 13 integral with the platen 3, to move forward, through the medium of the pusher case 14. Thus, molds attached individually to the stationary and movable platens 2 and 3 are clamped together. On completion of the mold clamping, the injection process is started, so that the molds are filled with molten resin from an injection nozzle (not shown). When this is finished, the compression process starts, whereupon the compression ser-

vomotor 19 is driven so that the compression ball nut 24 is rotated together with housing 17 by means of power transmission mechanism 35. Accordingly, the compression ball screw 29, along with supporter 31, moves forward. Thereupon, the compression pin 32, which is formed integrally with the ball screw 29 through the medium of the screw 33, projects into the movable mold 100, thereby thrusting a pressure block (not shown) in the movable mold into a cavity of the mold. As a result, a necessary pressure is applied to the resin in the mold, so that the resin reaches fine parts of the precision mold, and enjoys a uniform density. During the thrusting operation, the reducer output shaft 22, supported by means of the front and rear support portions 15 and 18, never undergoes bending or the like attributable to the force of action of the power transmission mechanism 35.

During the aforementioned compression process, the compression pin 32 is pressed for a required amount at a pressure and a speed previously set in accordance with the characteristics of the molds and resin, at a suitable point of time after the end of the injection. Control for this operation can be effected easily and accurately by means of the control section and the pressure sensor 38.

Subsequent processes, including processes for cooling, mold opening, etc., are not particularly different from those for injection molding. Therefore, a description of these processes is omitted herein.

Claims

1. A compressor unit of an injection-compression molding machine in which a pin is projected from a movable platen toward a mold mounted on said platen, thereby compressing molten resin filling said mold, comprising:

a servomotor disposed on said movable platen;
a ball nut operatively coupled to said servomotor for rotation; and
a ball screw adapted to be threadedly engaged with said ball nut and move in the axial direction, accompanying the rotation of said ball nut, and operatively coupled to said pin.

2. A compressor unit according to claim 1, further including:
a machine frame fixed to a peripheral surface of said movable platen; and
a housing supported by means of said movable platen for rotation and axial movement integral with the movable platen;
wherein said servomotor is fixed to said machine frame, and said ball nut is supported by means of said housing for integral rotation with said housing.

3. A compressor unit according to claim 2, wherein said machine frame includes first and second support portions spaced from and facing each other, said housing is disposed at an axial distance from said movable platen, a first pulley is rotatably supported between said first and second support portions, and is arranged to be rotated by means of said servomotor, a second pulley is fixed to the ball-nut-side end face of said housing for integral rotation therewith, a belt is stretched between said first and second pulleys, and said ball nut is fitted in said second pulley.

4. A compressor unit according to claim 3, wherein an output shaft of said servomotor is rotatably supported by means of said first and second support portions.

FIG. 1

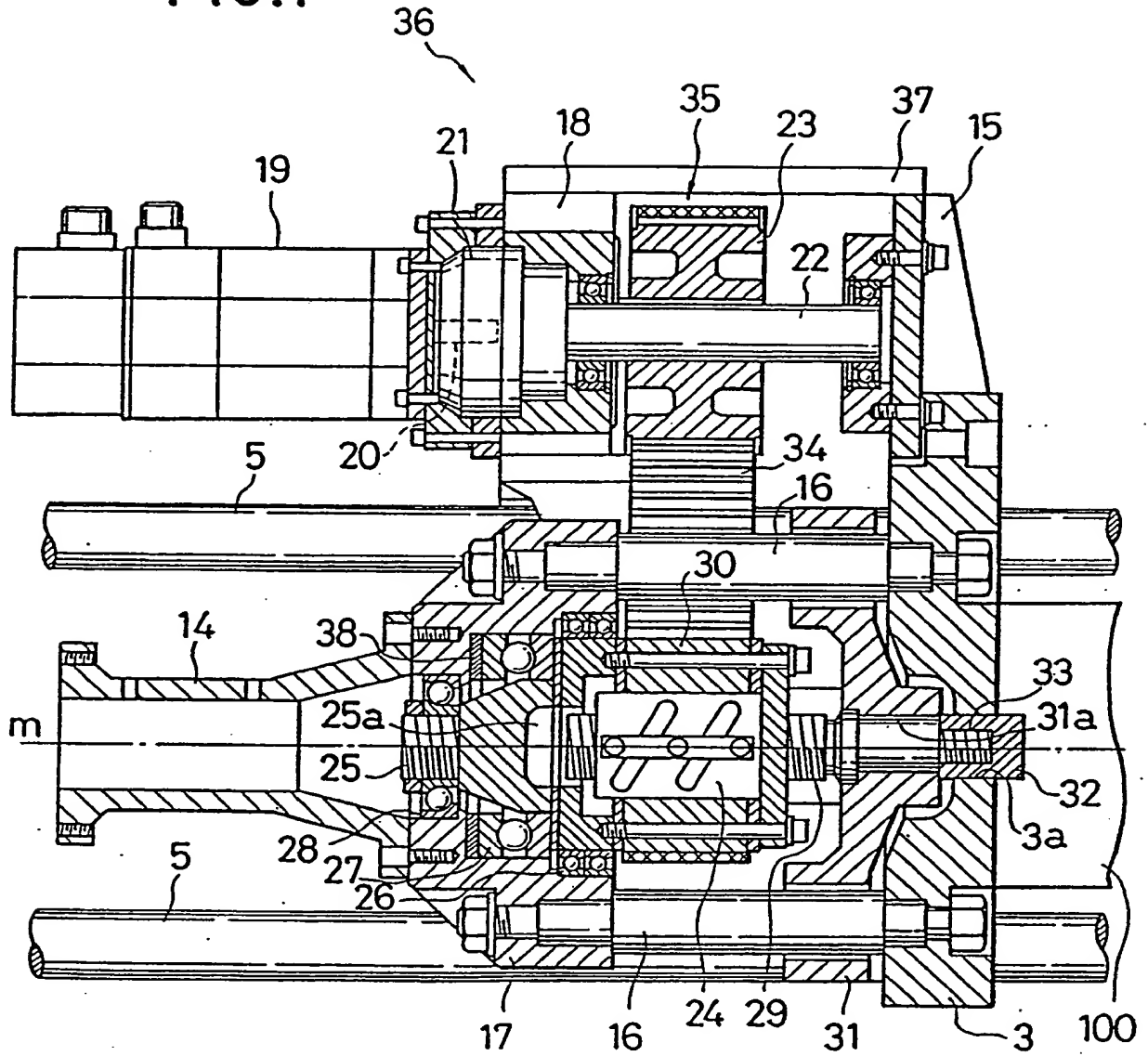


FIG. 3

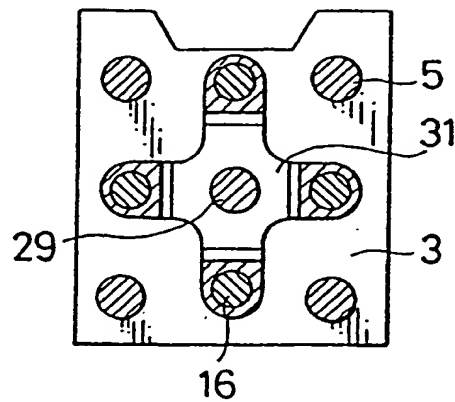
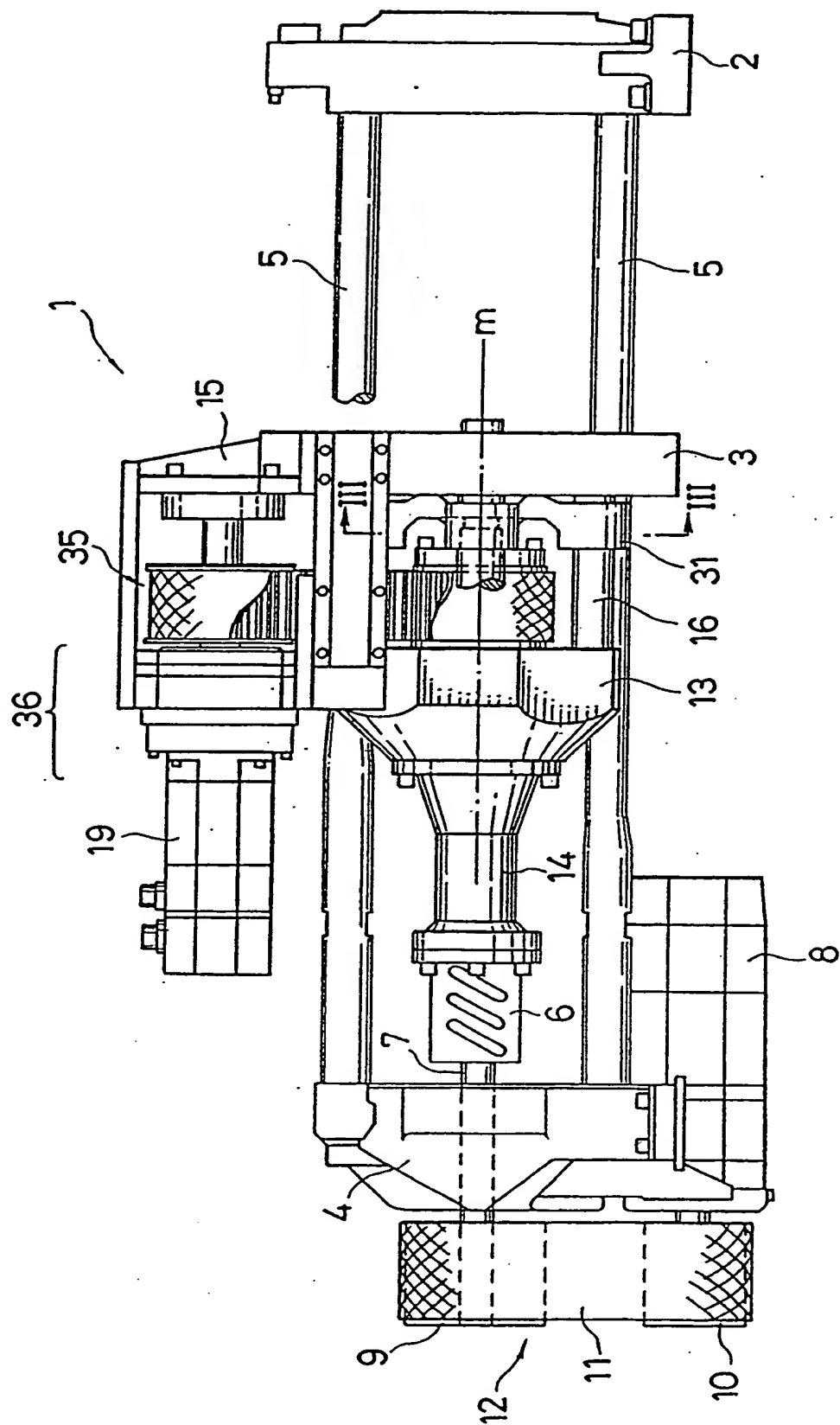


FIG. 2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/JP88/00990

I. CLASSIFICATION F SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶ —		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
Int.C1 ⁴	B29C45/64, 45/66, 45/70, B22D17/26	
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
IPC	B29C45/64, 45/66, 45/70, B22D17/26	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸		
Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1951 - 1988	
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1971 - 1988	
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹		
Category ¹⁰	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with Indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
Y	JP, A, 61-106221 (Meiki Seisakusho Kabushiki Kaisha) 24 May 1986 (24. 05. 86) Claim (Family: none)	1, 2
A	JP, A, 59-187826 (Nissei Plastic Industrial Co., Ltd.) 25 October 1984 (25. 10. 84) Page 2, lower left column, line 3 to lower right column, line 5 (Family: none)	1
A	JP, A, 59-9034 (Ricoh Co., Ltd.) 18 January 1984 (18. 01. 84) Claim (Family: none)	1
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>¹⁰ Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"S" document member of the same patent family</p> </div> </div>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
December 6, 1988 (06. 12. 88)	December 19, 1988 (19. 12. 88)	
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer	
Japanese Patent Office		

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (January 1985)